

VOX REDACTORIS

NEWTON'S THIRD LAW IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. In every interaction, there is a pair of forces acting on the two interacting objects. The size of the forces on the first object equals the size of the force on the second object.”

Newton's Third Law

The fundamental laws of physics have long tempted researchers to invent analogous laws in the spheres of the humanities and social sciences. The clearest example of this would be the attempt by Auguste Comte to turn history into something resembling ‘social physics.’ While the futility of such attempts nowadays seems obvious, the temptation nevertheless remains. It is not entirely without foundation. After all, in one way or another, a human being is, in all her complexity, an organic part of the physical world; historical events and phenomena, in their turn, may conform to the universal laws of being, formulated as a result of studying the qualities of physical objects. It is quite obvious that in social processes, ‘for every action there is an opposite reaction,’ although the correlation between those two forces is by no means linear and much less predictable than the relations between two plain physical objects.

In this respect, the key theme of this issue, featured in the ‘*Problema voluminis*’ section, and formulated as ‘Despotism and Resistance to Violence in Russian History,’ plays an outstandingly important role for our country, the history of which has been marked by extreme violence on a number of occasions, such as the Golden Horde Yoke, the bloody *oprichnina* of Ivan the Terrible, and the irreconcilable Soviet period.

Many questions still remain unanswered, such as: the role played by the tradition of Asian despotism in the evolution of Russian politics and culture; the relative weight in the formulation of the Soviet policy of modernisation of the country's Imperial past on the one hand, and of the specific challenges posed by the 20th century on the other; the impact the boundlessness of Russian space has had on the preservation of authoritarianism, and so on.

The methodological approaches of earlier scholars can no longer be used by contemporary historians, as the questions that need to be addressed today are on a much larger scale. Since the publication of a controversial monograph by Leonard Schapiro, who found totalitarianism both in Tudor England and in Ivan the Terrible's Russia [Schapiro], it would seem that this concept has established itself irrevocably in the history of ideas.

This fact to some extent explains the main idea behind the current issue: we deliberately chose not to deal with the topic of despotism and resistance to violence in the traditional guise of political repression and dissent. Instead, we thought it would be more productive to show that the coercion exercised by the authorities in relation to the whole population and separate social groups, corporations, or structures, can be very diverse. Such coercion is often not visibly ‘oppressive’, and may even be based on the notion of the ‘common good.’

The subjugation of the inhabitants of a conquered territory to the new order is also a form of coercion and violence, even if the administration may not necessarily intend to terrorize the population of the newly acquired lands. Without claiming to present an exhaustive solution to these problems, *Quaestio Rossica* authors offer an original take on the various aspects of one of the key issues in Russian history.

The articles by Alexander Filiushkin (Saint Petersburg) and Jürgen Heyde (Leipzig, Germany) constitute complementary studies examining Russian and Polish projects to incorporate the Eastern Baltic region. For all the differences in the methods adopted by the authorities of Russia and Rzeczpospolita, they nevertheless had something in common: while both countries in the period studied appeared, in the words of one of the authors, as ‘neonatal empires’ that were on the path of conquest, neither had a specific method when it came to absorbing and incorporating the conquered territories.

In his article ‘Law and Power. The Idea of Sovereignty in 16th Century Russia’ Giovanni Maniscalco Basile (Roma, Italy) explores the origins of the idea of the sovereignty of the Russian monarch in the 16th century. Basing his argument on close analysis of the law texts of the time, Ivan Peresvetov’s texts, and the Book of Royal Degrees, Basile finds a combination of patrimonial and sacred elements at the heart of the concept of sovereignty – a mix that managed to amalgamate the heritage of the Byzantine Empire and Moscow into the theory of ‘Moscow as the Third Rome.’

Mikhail Bentsianov (Yekaterinburg) investigates the question of land ownership by servicemen during the reign of Ivan the Terrible and the attempts at the ‘social formatting’ of the ruling strata of society by the state. The topic that is directly related to the issue of coercion is the story of the Time of Troubles – the civil war in Russia at the beginning of the 17th century. Igor Tiumentsev (Moscow), who explores the history of the Yeletski revolt (1606), concludes that the uprising in the ‘*poliski* towns’ located directly on the steppe frontier, began earlier than that in ‘*ukrainny*’ towns, located on the border with Poland. His discovery represents a very valuable addition to the existent accounts of the Russian Civil War of the early 17th century, when both violence and resistance to violence had become the norm.

The article by Elena Efremova (Yekaterinburg) shows how distorted were the methods of work on regional encyclopaedias in the early 1930s. Guided by good intentions to promote regional development, the leadership

of the Ural Encyclopaedia imposed strict censorship for all distantly independent authors, qualifying questionable articles as a manifestation of 'religious obscurantism' at the slightest opportunity. In the end, however, the Soviet authorities sensed the danger of dissent even in such a censored version, and the project was cancelled, with all its authors subjected to persecution.

It is obvious that despotism and violence were present not only in those specific periods traditionally identified with them, but also in relatively 'vegetarian' times. This is why in our view, it is just as important to analyse these phenomena in everyday life throughout the ages in Russia, as it is to look at the *oprichnina* terror and Stalin's camps.

The second idea unifying the current issue of *Quaestio Rossica* is the 'oddity' or rather 'oddities' of the Russian world, as represented in literary works. This section opens with an article by Natalia Kupina (Yekaterinburg) on the linguistic aspects of the category of 'strangeness' in Dostoevsky's novel *The Demons*. It continues with the reflections of American philologist Boris Gasparov (New York, USA) who juxtaposes a 'natural school' writer Fyodor Reshetnikov with Andrei Platonov, and in so doing reveals fundamental aspects of the Russian national world-view. The existential horror caused by the convergence of life and death, of the modern city and relict traditions (such as cannibalism) is in this case generated by the literary text.

The so-called 'new ethnography' expressed at the turn of the 19th century by Russian writer K. D. Nosilov is explored in the article by Elena Sozina (Yekaterinburg). Nosilov's endeavor to understand the 'other' forces him to consider his own life experience and ethnic origins, in a way that hinders his attempt to immerse himself fully in the life of the Vogul people.

The article by Mark Lipovetsky (Boulder, USA) suggests a new approach to understanding the tales of Urals writer P. P. Bazhov, based on the analysis of the image of the 'sinister'. Bazhov's tales, derived from Urals folklore, represent an unusual symbiosis of folk and realistic motifs, overturned in the past. The writer's fear of arrest during the Stalinist period spawned phantasmagorical descriptions of infernal characters, trapped in a complex game with the Ural stone-carving masters. The sinister in Bazhov's tales is to some extent comparable to the intense suspense in Tamas Toth's film *Children of Iron Gods*, where the industrial Urals of the 20th century is pictured as a place full of archaic rites and devoid of any sense of freedom. Philological articles, in their turn, shed light on 'strange' aspects of the paradoxical Russian being, which relates to the main theme of the issue.

The published materials contain research, based on archival sources, that reflects the complexity and versatility of the process of empire building and coercion enforcement – both from the point of view of the state and from the perspective of those suffering such coercion.

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Quaestio Rossica opens with the memoir of a prominent american slavist, professor emeritus of the University of Washington, Daniel Waugh, who worked extensively with Ancient Russian manuscript collections while living in Russia between 1968 and 1975 (the section 'Scientia et vita'). His fascinating stories about meetings and debates with Dmitry Likhachev, A. A. Zimin, S. M. Kashtanov, Ya. S. Lurie and others, reveal the genuine atmosphere of scientific research and the achievements made by researchers in the field of the humanities in the late Soviet era. These unique autobiographical notes, written with intense sincerity, constitute an impressive account of devotion to scientific enquiry, genuine scientific passion in the pursuit of truth, and objectivity and respect for colleagues in scientific research. Without doubt, the main driving force behind this memoir is Professor Waugh's genuine interest in Russia, which had a profound impact on his personal destiny.

The Editorial Board provides an opportunity for researchers to publish articles on a variety of topics, including, but by no means limited to, those announced in our first issue (see: *Quaestio Rossica*, 2013, № 1, p. 212–215). Novel ideas and innovative approaches are especially welcome. A case in point is the article by J. Kusber (Mainz, Germany), which raises the problem of how the phenomenon of culture transfer may be studied and suggests a solution by focussing on materials from the Russian Imperial period. European forms of education and science were brought to Russia, according to Kusber, via the personal initiative of actors, or networks, including Masonic lodges, clubs and societies. An important role was also played by the urban environment which – in contrast to the less dynamic rural milieu – created more favorable conditions for cultural exchange.

Professor Sergio Bertolissi (Naples, Italy) provided us with the rare opportunity to publish a chapter from his forthcoming monograph. He undertakes a rigorous historical study of the Siberian town of Mangazeya, which in the first half of the 17th century served as a transit point for the substantial fur trade of Northern Siberia. This article, filled with vivid realia and representative statistical data, shows that the precious fur trade was one of the main sources of income in pre-Petrine Russia.

Nikolay Petrukhintsev (Lipetsk) researches the financing and the number of the 'new order' officers in the Russian army in the second half of the 17th century. He shows how efficient were the military and the financial reforms of Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich, conducted during the Russian-Polish war. Modifications to the government's economic policy after the 'Copper Riot' helped stabilise the financial situation of foreigners in Russian service at this time.

An important part of the Reviews section (the 'Dialogus' part) is taken up by discussion of the new book by Aleksey Antoshin, *The Gold of Sennar*, dedicated to those craftsmen from the Urals who founded and organized local gold mining in Egypt. A unique historical document, discovered by the author of the monograph (recently translated into Arabic,) is a diary of one gold mining expert from the Urals, who describes in great detail the everyday routine of members of the Russian expedition to Egypt. Antoshin's discussion reveals many new aspects of this period, which will undoubtedly prove invaluable to scholars working in this area.

A number of book reviews ('Critica') are connected to the theme of the military. The first review considers a book by Belarusian author A. Janushkevich who studies the Livonian War in terms of its significance to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (review by V. Arakcheev.) The second concerns a monograph by N. V. Surzhikova on Prisoners of War in the Urals during the First World War (review by A. Bushmakov).

In our opinion, the second issue of *Quaestio Rossica* for the year 2014 will make a significant contribution to our interest in, and our understanding of the problems of violence and the development of imperial space in Russia. We hope very much that you will find much of interest in the pages that follow.

The Editorial Board

Schapiro L. (1972). *Totalitarianism*. London: Pall Mall Press.

ТРЕТИЙ ЗАКОН НЬЮТОНА В РУССКОЙ ИСТОРИИ

«Действию всегда есть равное
и противоположное противодействие, иначе,
взаимодействия двух тел друг на друга равны
и направлены в противоположные стороны»

Третий закон Ньютона

Фундаментальные законы физики долгое время вызывали соблазн разработать что-то подобное в сфере гуманитарного и социального знания. Самый яркий и хрестоматийный пример такого рода – попытка Огюста Конта превратить историю в подобие «социальной физики». Тщетность подобных усилий на сегодняшний день как будто очевидна, но соблазн сохраняется. Вероятно, он не беспочвенен: так или иначе, человек, во всей сложности понимания этого явления